



**Town of Surfside
Special Town Commission Meeting
MINUTES
April 4, 2023
5:00 PM
Commission Chambers**

1. Opening

1.A Call to Order

Mayor Danzinger called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

1.B Roll Call of Members

Town Clerk McCready called the roll with the following members present:

Present: Mayor Shlomo Danzinger, Vice Mayor Jeff Rose, Commissioner Marianne Meisheid and Commissioner Fred Landsman.

Absent: Commissioner Nelly Velasquez

Also Present: Acting Town Manager Hector Gomez and Town Attorney Caroline Saiz.

1.C Pledge of Allegiance

Chief Healy provided the pledge of allegiance.

2. Mayor, Commission and Staff Communication

Acting Town Manager Gomez recused himself from this process and left the dais and chambers since he is one of the applicants for the permanent position of Town Manager. He invited Human Resources Director Slate-McCloud to come up to the dais to continue with this process.

Mayor Danzinger spoke regarding putting forward and creating a process for the Town Manager recruitment and showed the numbers of the candidates and the scoring of those candidates.

2.A Town Manager Recruitment Process

Vice Mayor Rose stated that they are here to discuss how they want to continue with

the process. He spoke regarding the applicants and stated his sheet is public records and he went through all the applicants. He originally had 5 on them before he turned it in. He spoke with some 15 plus year seasoned employees and asked them how many town managers have they had during their tenure and they stated more than 10. He also asked the employees if they ever promoted from within and everyone of them stated no. He thought of that and that is why he placed only 1 name. He stated that Hector Gomez has been doing a great job and every commissioner here put him as their number 1 choice. He stated morale is higher than ever and the Town is moving very smoothly. He has the public works background with all the capital improvement projects in place. He spoke regarding his work ethics and would like to move forward with appointing him as the permanent town manager. He spoke about possibly wasting the other applicant's time in interviewing.

Mayor Danzinger opened the floor to public comments.

The following individuals from the public spoke:

Gerardo Vildostegui stated that he does not believe hiring Mr. Gomez permanently is a good idea. He spoke regarding the firing of the previous Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager. He stated they should have the most open search as possible. He spoke regarding Mr. Gomez firing the previous Assistant Town Manager and Police Chief. He also spoke regarding an Acting Town Manager hiring a permanent police chief. He suggested having new blood in Town.

Eliana Salzhauer stated that the former Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager and Police Chief should be released from speaking about their firing. She stated if Mr. Gomez would have applied he would not have been considered but is being considered because he is a puppet for the commission. She spoke regarding Vice Mayor Rose only putting one name down and he should not have done that.

Vice Mayor Rose stated that Mr. Greene and Mr. Torres both resigned and were not fired.

Mayor Danzinger closed the floor to public comments.

Mayor Danzinger addressed the comments made and stated that Mr. Gomez has proved himself and he has seen the work he has been doing. He asked the Town Attorney if there is anything against or unethical if they modify or change the process.

Town Attorney Saiz stated that there is nothing discriminatory or unethical if the Commission chooses to change the process.

Vice Mayor Rose stated that they all put Mr. Gomez as number one. He asked Human Resources Director Slate-McCloud if there has ever been a time that all commissioners put the same candidate as number one. He also asked her if any interim manager's been promoted from within.

Human Resources Director Slate-McCloud stated that in the previous one it has not occurred. She also stated that in her tenure she has had 3 interim town managers and non were offered the position.

Mayor Danzinger provided the chart he created with the candidates ranking and the

commission crossover.

A motion was made by Commissioner Landsman to adjust the process of hiring of a Town Manager with the input of the Commission with eliminating the tie for 5th place and move forward interviewing the top 4 candidates on April 17th. The motion died for lack of a second.

A motion was made by Commissioner Meisheid for purposes of discussion, seconded by Vice Mayor Rose. The motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Commissioner Meisheid stated she does not understand why they had this meeting because there is a process that has been agreed upon. She spoke regarding the other candidates that were scored. She spoke regarding the candidate she gave a 4 to and she stated they should continue the process. She recommended interviewing the 7 candidates.

Commissioner Landsman stated his understanding of this meeting has changed direction and what he would like to put forward with the human resources background he has, he believes they need a process and interview the candidates. He spoke regarding doing a great disservice to not move forward with the interview process to Mr. Gomez and the other candidates.

Vice Mayor Rose would not want to interview 7 but he is fine with interviewing 5. He again reiterated that everyone put Mr. Gomez as number 1 and feels they want to interview everyone to appease some of the people out there but still believes it is a waste of time for everyone.

Commissioner Landsman stated to say going through the motions is not the right thing to say.

Mayor Danzinger stated they do not have to get derogatory. He stated this is not delaying the process by having this meeting.

Human Resources Director Slate-McCloud stated it is not delaying the process by having this meeting.

Mayor Danzinger stated that the process was not to decide which candidate we like or not like. This was to assign a number and maybe Mr. Gomez has an advantage because we have seen him perform and has proven himself. He stated for some reason everyone put Mr. Gomez as number 1. He stated some might want to shorten the process but it seems that there is a consensus to go through the process and that is fine. The reason for this meeting was to see if the process was to continue because due to Sunshine Law we had to have this meeting to discuss this. He would like to see the process shortened and spoke regarding the crossover among the Commission and maybe limit it down to the top 4 and he would be fine with that.

Commissioner Meisheid stated that if everyone would have filled out the chart correctly then they might have had a different scoring turnout and that is why she feels strongly to interview the 7.

Mayor Danzinger stated that there is nothing in the process that states that you have to choose 5. He stated that if he does not see someone qualified and does not feel comfortable with that applicant then he will not put their name down.

Vice Mayor Rose reiterated his previous comments and is fine with interviewing 7 candidates if that is what the Commission chooses.

A motion was made by Commissioner Landsman to interview the top 4 and eliminate the 5th place tie and move forward with the interview on April 17th, seconded by Mayor Danzinger. The motion stays status quo with a 2-2 tie vote with Commissioner Meisheid and Vice Mayor Rose voting in opposition.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Rose to appoint Hector Gomez as the Town Manager, seconded by Mayor Danzinger. The motion stays status quo with a 2-2 tie with Commissioner Meisheid and Commissioner Landsman voting in opposition.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Rose to interview all 7 applicants, seconded by Commissioner Meisheid. The motion stays status quo with a 2-2 tie with Mayor Danzinger and Commissioner Landsman voting in opposition.

Commissioner Landsman spoke regarding the interviewing process of the 7 applicants.

Due to the status quo the Commission will move forward with interviewing all 7 applicants.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss before the Commission, a motion was made by Commissioner Landsman to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Meisheid. The motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Accepted this _____ day of _____, 2023.

Shlomo Danzinger, Mayor

Attest:

Sandra N. McCready, MPA, MMC
Town Clerk